



# ICFF

Institute of Customs & Freight Forwarding

Your Industry Professional Body - The Cornerstone of Excellence

## ICFF Weekly *Connect*



*By Devlyn Naidoo, Chairperson – ICFF*

### History is Made | A First for South Africa's Customs, Freight Forwarding & Supply Chain Management Environment



#### A Message from the Chairperson on Our SAQA Accreditation

The 9th of June 2026 is a special day indeed, a day that is being written into our country's history books as a momentous milestone and a mark of distinction for the South African freight forwarding, customs compliance and supply chain environment as we have come to know it. The recognition of the **Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding** by the **South African Qualifications Authority**, is a **first of its kind milestone for the freight forwarding sector that is preceded by many sacrifices, unwritten stories and tireless efforts.**

I often cite in many public forums "anything a man can do; women can do a million times better" and this is proven once more by at Yolandi Derksen and Ingrid Jens Du Buisson (MSc) a Chairperson-CEO duo that have led the realization of this milestone with great effort, resilience and precision, having worked tirelessly with support from Lebogang Letsoalo, Strini Reddy, Lerato Mapheto, Tuelo Mogashoa, Juanita Maree, CEO of **SAAFF NPC (Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders NPC)**, Garry Marshall CEO of SAEPA, and Maria Du Preez, Chair of SAAFF NPC (Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders NPC).

This 9th day of June 2026 thus signifies the start of the next chapter where the current and future generation of seasoned supply chain professionals (the many young men and women workforce and aspiring entrants), logistics experts and compliance executives are identified, recognized, mentored and professionally developed. This endorsement allows each professional to walk in authority, equipped with confidence and enabled by professionalism, through formal recognition by the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding as the future leaders in our space, where knowledge is transferred responsibly and professionalism is earned organically.

A well-respected global compliance and regulatory leader, Ms Natalie Schworer who serves as the portfolio director for SARS and Other Government Agencies at SAAFF NPC (Southern African Association of Freight Forwarders NPC) often talks about concept of essentialism i.e. the "why" behind a decision, and there simply could not be a time, more prudent than this to consider the why behind an individual being professionally designated, or an organization being recognized. This is a not as a stamp of validation, nor an assessment of competence instead it is an **official mark of recognition, as a distinguished professional for the already accomplished professional and as a progressive, well-structured pathway for the aspirant, #June16th is approaching.**



There are many inspirational veteran CEO's, MD's, academics, leaders, entrepreneurs and visionaries, both past and present, many of whom are tagged here and those that aren't, too many to mention, these are the heroines and hero's that we as professionals and aspirants, encounter along in our journey, from whom we draw inspiration, motivation, guidance and life lessons. These individuals have earned their place at the helm for a reason, to lead responsibly and empower the current and future generations with an opportunity, we would be pleasantly surprised at what young people can achieve when given an opportunity dovetailed with the right mentorship and guidance. As the recently appointed chairperson of the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding I choose to not be promotional about this post, however more a call to action for to the leadership of organizations to partner with the now SAQA validated body and to allow your staff to progress the journey of professional designation, the time is now, let us claim our space. Simply put, professionalisation = happy clientele + revenue growth.

The question is really; how can you not be a part of this historic journey? Each of us have a higher purpose, a reason for existence, a personal calling, the role you are blessed with in your organization, your credentials, your qualifications or the number of years you have accumulated in the industry, all of it has somehow led you to this post, the destiny of intentionally deciding to work with the **first SAQA recognized body for customs, supply chain and freight forwarding professionals**, will **amplify your well-established position and solidify your lasting impact on our industry**. A recently published piece brings home the **impact and relevance**:

***Mastering The Art of Logistics: Five essential takeaways for South African logisticians that featured on FOCUS on Transport & Logistics Issue 5 2026.***

You would be glad to know that this was not another ubiquitous food review, for those who didn't get that very dry sense of humour, more so after reading the title, you are forgiven, it is still early in the year, and we are slowly adjusting to the routine. Having said that though, "local is indeed lekker". It is a lot easier than it appears, the detailed organization and implementation of a complex operation that is (logistics). Appreciating the rawness and authenticity of a non-chat GPT article is good for the brain at times, allowing us to express our views and opinions and not those of some artificially intelligently generated response.

Onto the business end of this piece, yes, we are often told that global supply chains are unpredictable, but are they really? In a time when you be anything, be smart, be data centric. Data plays a crucial role in logistics by helping businesses make smarter decisions about inventory, shipping routes, and overall supply chain management. In simple terms, data in logistics means using information and analytics to predict, plan, and improve how goods move from place to place.

The availability of data and analytical insights nowadays is akin to the popularity of cassettes in the 80's, everyone has access and are sharing reports with re-written labels at times. For the Gen-Z reader, cassettes are, wait, you can do some desktop research. Now back to the topic of predictability and this is really the first of the five and perhaps the primary take-away in the series of five to mastering the art of logistics. It begins with data, in the words of data scientist W. Edwards Deming, "without data, you're just another person with an opinion" Relevant and robust datasets enable logisticians to identify with a reasonable level of accuracy, the specific and most probable developments in cost optimization, inventory management, supply and demand and service reliability. There are various platforms that provide analysis and insights in respect of seasonal trends, international transport costs, supply and demand forecasts and rate of exchange fluctuations, a few of the critical aspects that need to be assessed in advance, actively monitoring and consolidating this information to enable right decision making and planning, two essential tenets that very aspiring and practicing artist (logistician) must live by.



As Simon Sinek aptly put it, “People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it”, The purpose of a logistics professional is to efficiently manage the flow of goods, services, and information from origin to consumption, ensuring the right product gets to the right place, at the right time, in the right condition, and at the lowest cost. They optimize the entire supply chain by coordinating procurement, warehousing, inventory, transportation, and distribution, while also handling returns (reverse logistics) and adapting to disruptions. Being rooted in supply chain coordination in respect of planning and overseeing the entire journey of a product, from raw materials to the final customer is a non-negotiable driver that would follow and flow into the various ancillary services including but not limited to inventory & warehousing, transportation management, procurement, process optimization and reverse logistics.

It is therefore essential and stands to reason that purpose is a crucial focus area that every logistics professional must discover and live in every planning meeting, every client engagement and every interaction with role players in their respective global supply chains. Platforms and transactions are driven by the reason behind them, it rests, awakens and lives in the why. Therefore, at the heart of every data-driven decision one must cultivate the sense of purpose and act it out as a role player in the supply chain. Believe in what you do, grounded in the why on time, every time. It is a mantra that requires consistent recital and practice, “our purpose is to create efficiencies in our supply chains to deliver service excellence to every customer”.

An imperative and in-depth awareness of global developments, dovetailed with the validity, authenticity, currency and sufficiency in the technical skill is essential to delivery cost and time effectiveness which underpins service reliability is the penultimate must live by practice for logisticians wherein the aim is to be ahead of the curve, it is however critical to appreciate that awareness without application is frivolous to say the least, thus taking us nicely into the final and perhaps most potent takeaway, the necessity to work as a strategic thinker, constantly asking what can be done differently to deliver intelligently, efficiently and effectively?

The "art of logistics" refers to mastering the complex flow of goods, services, and information through creative problem-solving, strategic thinking, and technical skill, going beyond mere processes to involve human ingenuity and aesthetic understanding, often viewed through the lens of how artists utilize supply chain systems or how logistics itself creates a visual symphony of movement and interconnectedness in a globalized world. It's about the 'how' and 'why' of supply chains, encompassing everything from demand planning to last-mile delivery, ensuring efficiency, precision, and sustainability.

Whilst the devil is in the detail, execution can be lethal if there is an absence of monitoring and valuation is critical to ensure that plans are well followed through with various nodal points as key indicators in the critical path to efficient delivery. Continuously improving workflows, reducing costs, and increasing efficiency, often using technology.

As we pen off, you can go on and confidently pick up the brush, the assignment is your canvas, remember the detail and master the art of a detailed organization and implementation of a complex operation one stroke at a time, the picture will appear easy on the eye and who knows you could very well be the next Picasso or better yet, Da Vinci – comparatively speaking that is, more than art you would reckon, indeed much more.

As I pen off on this article, I say Thank you, Dankie, Ngiyathokoza, Ndiyabulela, Ngiyabonga, Ke a leboga, Ke a leboha, Ke a leboga, Ngiyabonga, Ndo livhuwa, Ndza nkhenisa to the ICFF CEO, Outgoing Chairperson and Board of Directors for affording me the honour and privilege to play a small part as a servant of South Africa for a better, brighter tomorrow for our economy, our country and our people!

Join the Institute of Customs and Freight Forwarding today and let us take you there together, growing graciously! The power is in your hands!

**- Devlyn Naidoo - ICFF Chairperson**